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DETECTIVE STORIES.

From the Diary of a New York Detective.

EDITED BY FRANK PEMMON.

Betrayed by a Dog.

Animals, especially dogs, have played an important part in the affairs of men. There is now in Chicago a dog that has become the companion and assistant of a policeman, and really does help his friend to detect and ferret out thieves and other evil doers. I was once concerned in a case in which a dog played a most important part, and led finally, through no fault of his own, however, to the detection of his master.

The store of John Camden had been broken into and the safe blown open and robbed of a large sum of money. The cash had been received that day too late to be deposited in the bank. Next morning it was gone, and no trace of the thief was to be found. At least, Mr. Camden and his clerks and the police officials found no trace of him. Not so with me. I was sent to look up the affair. I found the office in a state of confusion. The door of the safe had been blown off and the contents lay scattered over the floor. I asked Mr. Camden if he had disturbed anything. He said he had not, except to satisfy himself that the money was gone.

Near by was a cat, dead, her throat cut evidently by a hatchet that lay close at hand. This seemed to me to be the basis of a clue. Why had the cat been killed? It is not necessary to kill cats in order to prevent them from telling tales. I examined the unfortunate feline more carefully. In addition to the ugly cut on the throat there were other and more significant marks upon the back. A saucer, evidently having recently contained milk, stood near by. Also an overturned can from which pussy's supply of milk had evidently been obtained. The contents of this had been consumed. Mr. Camden informed me that this can had been filled with milk only the previous evening. Among the papers scattered upon the floor was one that attracted my attention. It was a portion of a note written in French. I was aware that Mr. Camden did not write or speak French. I questioned him about it. He could give me no information. He had never seen it before.

"Did any one know you had a large sum of money in the safe?" I asked.

"Yes, a number of people knew of the fact. I had been expecting to receive the money for the past two weeks."

"Who are those who knew you had it?"

"My wife, brother, the man I sold the property to (that is how I came to have such a large sum at one time) and the real estate dealers through whom I sold it."

"Any one else?"

"Oh, yes, a friend, my daughter's music teacher. He it was who found me a purchaser for the property."

"He is a Frenchman, is he not, and is invariably accompanied by his pretty little dog?"

"Why, yes; do you know him?"

"No—never saw him. He knew you had a large sum of money in the safe?"

"Yes; he saw me deposit it there."

"When did he give your daughter her last music lesson?"

"Last evening, but he complained of being ill and went away earlier than usual."

"Did he have his dog with him?"

"Yes; he claims the dog is his only friend."

"Have you a specimen of his handwriting at hand?"

"Yes; I have several acknowledgments of money received."

He produced them. I compared the writing with that of the note I had found near the safe. They were, as far as I could determine, identically the work of the same person.

Satisfied that I was on the right track, I caused a watch to be put upon the music teacher with the result that he was arrested as he was about to leave the city. He made a full confession.

"How did you guess it was a Frenchman who robbed my safe, and that he was accompanied by a pretty little dog?" inquired Mr. Capade.

"I found the cat had been killed by a dog, and his master afterward cut her throat with the hatchet to ward off suspicion from the dog; the dog drank the milk which had been provided for the cat. I found a note written in French and evidently dropped by the thief near the safe, and his dog was a pretty little animal because his master's patrons, like yourself, would not tolerate the presence of any other kind, and you told me the dog always accompanied his master."

The Key to the Mystery.

The most puzzling case upon which I ever worked was that of the murder of John Long. The facts are briefly these: Mr. Long, a wealthy, retired merchant, living at the home of his nephew, failed to answer the dinner-bell one day. He was a man who always prided himself upon his punctuality, and his failure to appear at dinner at the usual hour caused no little surprise. A messenger was sent to his room to call him. No response came to repeated knocks upon his chamber door. The door was locked. Fearful that something had happened to him, Mr. Brant—the old gentleman's nephew—set about breaking down the door. This was no easy task, as the door was made of oak and fastened by a ponderous lock and large brass hinges. After considerable effort the door yielded to their

blows and fell in. A horrible sight met the gaze of the anxious family. Mr. Long lay across the bed, cold and still in death, with his throat cut from ear to ear.

Had the old man been murdered? If so, how had the murderer entered the room? The old man was known always to keep his door locked. Besides, there did not appear to be anything missing. If it was a case of suicide, what had become of the implement with which the deed had been done? It was nowhere to be found. The old man always seemed in the best of spirits, and had every thing to live for.

If not suicide, then it was, of course, murder. Who, then, was the murderer?

It was my good fortune to be assigned to work up the case. I say good fortune because I like a difficult job, the more difficult the better, and this was one of the most difficult of all I had ever undertaken.

I examined the premises, and questioned the family and the servants in order to learn all I could about the murdered man, his habits, his financial affairs, etc. In particular I examined the room in which the foul murder had been committed. One of the windows was partially opened. This suggested the theory that the murderer might have gained access to the room by means of the window, but it was impossible for him to have done this in broad daylight, and the window was over 20 feet from the ground.

One of those who seemed most eager to

believe that Mr. Long had committed suicide was Thomas Brant, a scapegrace nephew of the old man.

"If he committed suicide," said I, "where is the implement with which he did the deed?"

"Perhaps he used his razor and then threw it out of the window," suggested Thomas.

"Impossible. The jugular vein was cut and death must have been almost instantaneous."

Nevertheless, I examined the grass under the window (which opened over the orchard) and found the old man's razor. There was, however, no blood upon it.

The most peculiar thing in the room was the lock on the door and the key belonging to it. It was a large lock, much larger than those made at the present time, and the key was a large, heavy, brass one weighing several pounds. I was informed that this lock had done duty in the door of the store in which Mr. Long started in business, and when the building was demolished, Mr. Long preserved the lock and key (which, by the way, he had designed himself). Furthermore, as soon as he entered his room it was his custom to lock his door, remove the key from the lock and hang it upon a nail on the wall. Here it had been found on the day of the murder. There was believed to be but one such key in existence. I believed otherwise, and made a tour of all the lock-smith's shops in the city in order to verify my suspicions. At last my search was rewarded. I found one who ad-

mitted, although at first unwilling to do so, that he had made a key similar to the one I carried. He had made it for a young man who answered to the description of Thomas Brant. This much gained, the next step was to connect Brant with the murder of his uncle. This was soon done. Brant was sent to prison for life, as it was not proved that he had entered his uncle's room for the purpose of murder, but simply of robbery.

The Missing Finger.

Red Joe was an industrious young man. He worked early and late at his profession. While others slept he toiled upward in the night; in fact, night was his favorite time for toiling. He didn't exactly make hay while the sun shone because he didn't do any work while the sun was shining on his side of the earth. He was willing to put his hand to almost anything that did not belong to him, and which he could dispose of without fear of detection. Red Joe was a burglar, and a most successful one. That is to say, he succeeded so well at the burglary business that he spent the greater part of his time behind prison walls. He was concerned, either alone, or in company with others of his ilk, in some of the most important "breaks" that the police have any record of. Whenever a big burglary was committed, the police invariably tried to connect Red Joe

with it, providing that gentleman didn't happen to be "otherwise engaged" at the time. This was the case in the burglary of which I have to tell. The facts are as follows:

The home of Mr. Reed, the rich banker, had been broken into and a quantity of silver plate, valued at \$5,000, stolen. It had occurred during the absence of the family. The affair was reported to the police, and a large reward offered for the detection and conviction of the guilty parties. The police at once set about unearthing and following up clues. But all their labor was in vain. The burglar had carefully covered up his tracks, and left no clue as to his identity. Nobody had seen him enter or leave the house. There was no one in the house at the time of the robbery. The family had gone off for the night, and the butler who had been left in charge took advantage of their absence to visit some of his friends. During his absence—which he averred did not extend over two hours—the burglar had come, seen and conquered. He entered a poor man and went away comparatively rich. At first the butler was suspected and arrested, but he established a satisfactory alibi and was soon released from custody.

The police did all in their power to bring the guilty ones to justice, but failed. The affair was then placed in my hands. The solution of the mystery seemed hopeless. The thief had left no clue as to his identity, and none of the booty had been disposed of at any of the pawn

shops in the city or surrounding cities. I did not despair, however. I went to the scene of the robbery and made a most thorough examination of the premises. I found nothing. I was about to give up when I came upon something that promised to be a clue. I inquired from the master of the house whether there had been any repairs made in the house recently. There had. The whole interior of the house had been repainted and repapered just previous to the robbery. In fact the finishing touches had been given the very day the burglary had been committed. Good. Then getting the address of the painter and other workmen, I went to them and made certain inquiries which were answered to my satisfaction. Then I reported at headquarters. Two days later, Red Joe was arrested and charged with the robbery. His premises were searched and most of the stolen plate recovered. The clue I had discovered was this. On the door, frame near the safe, was the imprint of fingers in the then fresh varnish. The imprint of only the thumb and three fingers appeared. One finger was missing—the one next to the little finger. This was a peculiarity of Red Joe's right hand. This discovery might mean a good deal for me, possibly nothing. You know the result. Red Joe was watched, and his suspicious actions furnished sufficient grounds for the issuing of a warrant for his arrest. He is now "doing time."

A Grave Robbery.

One of the most peculiar cases with which I have ever had to deal was that of a grave robbery. The grave—or rather the vault, in which the remains of Mr. L—, a wealthy Russian (I do not give his name for reasons which will presently appear), had been deposited was found disturbed two days after the burial. Examination proved that the lid of the casket had been removed with the apparent intention of robbery. But, strange to say, no robbery had been committed. The gold rings on the fingers of the dead man had not been touched, and these were the only valuables the body contained. Why had the grave been opened? Nobody could offer an explanation, least of all I who had been retained at the desire of the family of the dead man to sift this strange affair to the bottom, and discover, if possible, who had dared to desecrate the grave of their relative. Nothing had been taken from the body as far as the family of the dead man knew; yet the thief or thieves had plenty of time in which to rob the body if they so desired. They had not been frightened off. They had carefully covered up the grave and gone away evidently unmolested.

It was impossible to arrive at a conclusion as to *why* the grave had been opened. It now lay with me to find out *who* had done it. It had rained during or previous to the time of the grave robbery, and the footprints of those

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concerned in it—three different persons it appeared, were plainly discernible in the soft ground. The signs of carriage wheels were also present. This was my only clue upon which I had to work. I questioned the superintendent, whose office and residence was at the entrance to the cemetery. He had been away on the evening of the robbery, and could give me no information. He was confident no carriage had entered the cemetery after 10 o'clock, at which hour he had returned and locked the cemetery gates. There was only one carriage entrance to the cemetery. I had an impression at the time that the man was unnecessarily nervous in answering my questions, and seemed relieved when I got through.

A month passed and an event occurred which threw considerable light upon the mystery. The will of the late Mr. L— had been opened and read. Among the many bequests was the following most peculiar one: "I bequeath to John Johnson, the dentist (with address), a certain gold-capped tooth in my lower jaw, and request that he extract this and preserve it according to the terms of an agreement made between us many years ago." This not only threw light upon, but complicated the mystery. Perhaps the grave had been opened to allow the dentist to claim his strange legacy. Once more the body was disinterred by the friends of the dead man. The gold-capped tooth was missing from the lower jaw.

I next called upon John Johnson, the dentist.

Despite his American name I could see that he was a foreigner—a Russian, I was certain.

I mentioned the occasion of my visit. "Did you open the grave of Mr. L—— and remove a certain gold-capped tooth from the mouth of the dead man?" I asked, point blank.

Mr. Johnson seemed at a loss how to reply. At last, he said "No."

"Then the cemetery superintendent was wrong. You did not drive in with two companions in a carriage, and this is not your card which I picked up near the grave of Mr. L——?" said I, showing him one of his business cards which I had surreptitiously obtained. "You might as well confess. You were only getting your rights, after all, but why did you go about it in such an underhanded way?"

"I don't understand you."

"Are you not acquainted with the contents of Mr. L——'s will, the gold-capped tooth and all?"

"Did he put that in the will?" inquired the dentist in a surprised tone.

"Then you do know something about it?"

"Yes; it is a strange story, and if you will promise—nay, swear—never to reveal it, I will tell it to you. Do you swear?"

Something in the manner and bearing of the man told me that he was no thief, and I readily promised what he asked, and he told me the following strange story:

A Strange Story.

Mr. Johnson conducted me into an inner room, closed and locked the door and bade me be seated.

"My name," he began, "is not John Johnson. I am living under an assumed name for reasons of a political nature. I am a Russian by birth, and a Nihilist by thought and training. I deplore the condition of my unhappy country. I have done my part and am still willing to do it, to help bring about her freedom from the terrible despotism under which she suffers. I am acquainted with the horrors of Siberian prison-mines. I was sentenced to Siberia for life, for complicity in a Nihilistic plot. My brother was sent there soon afterward. Together we planned escape. I succeeded. He fell. Shot down by an officer of his Despotic Majesty. I managed to reach England, where I found many friends. In London I became acquainted with the late Mr. L_____. He was also a Nihilist, and a victim of Alexander's wrath. He, too, was an exile from his country. For either of us to return meant instant capture at the hands of the Czar's well-trained police—or worse than that, Siberia. I lived in London five years. There I learned the trade of a dentist. Upon my banishment to Siberia, my property had been confiscated to the government.

"At the end of five years I came to the United States, where I have lived ever since. Mr. L_____ came here soon after I did. He was a rich man. Just previous to his arrest, he had managed to convert most of his property into money which he deposited in a London bank. This had been used to effect his escape from Siberia. He had rela-

tives in this country with whom he lived up to the time of his death. Soon after coming to this country, he imparted to me a secret which had been in his keeping for thirty years, it having been transmitted to him by his father. He was then a man of sixty. One day, ten years ago, he came into my office—this very room—and said he wished to speak with me upon a most important matter, one concerning our beloved country.

"Do you see this tooth," he inquired, pointing to a large, gold-capped molar in his lower jaw.

"Yes," I replied.

"That tooth," he continued, after having made sure that we were alone, "that tooth holds, has held for thirty years, a secret of the utmost importance to you and me, and to all liberty loving Russians. I tell you this because I know you will guard the secret as you would your life. In the cavity of that tooth, under the gold cap (here he lowered his voice) is a piece of parchment which contains the plans of a secret underground entrance to the Czar's palace at St. Petersburg, an entrance which, as you will readily understand, will prove of the utmost importance to our friends when the time is ripe to use it. This plan has been in the possession of our family for hundreds of years, having been drawn originally by an ancestor of mine, one of the designers of the palace. I am the last male member of my family, and now bequeath this secret to you. Upon my death, I desire that you extract the tooth, and preserve or dispose of the plan in whatever way seems best to you. You know its importance. I can rely upon your judgment. The dentist who inserted it in my tooth, thirty years ago in Russia, is now dead. You and I alone now hold the secret. Do you accept the trust?"

"I do," I answered.

"That was Mr. L——'s story.

"When he died I happened to be out of the city. On my return I hastened to obtain possession of the tooth in the manner that seemed best to me. I was not aware that the matter was mentioned in Mr. L——'s will, which it would appear he had intended to make public before his death, but was unable to do so. The plan which I found in the cavity of the tooth is now in safe hands in Russia, and the world may yet learn whether the well-guarded secret is destined to be utilized.

"I tell you this because I know you are an American, a lover of liberty, and will not divulge the secret I have told you.

"Mr. Johnson died many years ago, and now I give this story to the world, confident that even its perusal by the Russian officials cannot in any way endanger the secret of the gold-capped tooth.
